

The Presbyterians not chargable with
King CHARLES's DEATH:

I N T W O
LETTERS

Publiſh'd by their

MINISTERS,

Some Time before,

With their NAMES ſubſcri-
bed, in order to prevent it.



E X O N:

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THE
P R E F A C E.



IS an unaccountable humour in some men, that they love to revile their neighbours, but cannot patiently bear any thing said in their defence. A fearful outcry has been made against the Presbyterians for cutting off King CHARLES's head, and some have so little modesty, honour, or conscience, as still to avow the charge, tho' it has been confuted over and over, and they have nothing to support it. These remonstrances against that fact were made at the critical juncture when it was in agitation, and so plainly shew the integrity and courage of the Presby-

THE PREFACE.

terian Ministers, that they need no comment. The design of printing them is not to convince the men of intrigue, who are playing their game by such false representations, but to undeceive honest men who are imposed on by those wicked arts; that so an unreasonable cause of bitterness being removed, men may be disposed to a better temper.

NO one can have any reason to be offended at this publication: Nay, it must please all that are not strangers to that charity which rejoiceth not in Iniquity, but rejoiceth in the Truth. I am sure, the Presbyterians were very well pleased to see the Noble DECLARATION which was made by some of the BISHOPS against the late unnatural Rebellion, and sorry that any should be said to have refused to sign it, tho' they might have done it without incurring such danger as the Ministers did by these Letters. And why our adversaries should not as
much

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much approve our good conduct as we do theirs, I cannot imagin.

MY Lord Clarendon has acknowledg'd the zeal which the Ministers shewed on this occasion. "The

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"Preachers, (says he) which
"had sounded the trumpets loudest to,
"and throughout the war, preached now
"as furiously against all wicked at-
"tempts and violence against the per-
"son of the King, and foolishly urged
"the obligation of the Covenant, (by
"which they had involved him in all the
"danger he was in) for the security of
"his person." By this account 'tis evident,
they went no further than a free and brave
Parliament did: And if the Presbyterian Mi-
nisters must be reproach'd with all the false
steps taken by the Parliament, the Episcopal
Ministers, by a parity of reason, must share
the blame of all the faults of the adverse
party. His Lordship, or rather his edi-
tors, might have spared the word foolish-
ly,

The P R E F A C E.

ly, since the Covenant certainly obliged all that took it to every lawful thing they solemnly promis'd therein. But since it appears by this testimony that the Ministers preaching was then of a piece with these remonstrances I now publish, all honest men will do them the justice to own, they had no hand in the King's death.

James Seirce.





*A serious and faithful Representation of the
Judgments of Ministers of the Gospel with-
in the Province of London; contained
in a Letter from them to the General and
his Council of War; delivered to His Ex-
cellency, by some of the Subscribers, Jan.
18. 1648.*

PROVERBS XXIV. 11, 12.

If thou forbear to deliver them that are drawn
unto Death, and those that are ready to be
slain: If thou sayest, Behold we know it not;
doth not he that pondereth the Heart consider
it? and he that keepeth thy Soul, doth not
he know it? and shall not he render to every
Man according to his Works.

*May it please Your Excellency, with those of
your Council;*



HEREAS of late divers
Applications have been made,
as well in Writing as by Ver-
bal Messages, inviting the Mi-
nisters of *London*, or some of
them, to meet with the Officers
of the Army, in their Consul-
tations about Matters of Religion; we Ministers
of the Gospel within the Province of *London*
hold

hold it our Duty, as then to refuse any such Meeting as was proposed, so now to give Your Lordship and your Council the Reasons of that Refusal, lest by our Silence we should seem to be wanting in that Ingenuity and Candour which becomes all, but especially the Ministers of *Jesus Christ*. And understanding that some of our Brethren, at one Conference before Your Lordship and some of your Council *, and at another with some of your Chief Officers †, have already manifested their Dislike, both of your late Actions towards many of the Worthy Members of the Honourable House of Commons, and what likewise you have published in your late Remonstrance and Declaration, as your Intention for settling the Affairs of the Kingdoms, (as we were informed by some of them, and willed thus to signify) we thought fit hereby to manifest our Concurrence with those our Reverend Brethren; humbly desiring, That while we use that Plainness and Freedom which becometh the Ambassadors of *Christ*, this our Performance may not be misinterpreted, either as a transgressing the Law of Christian Meekness, or exceeding the Bounds of Ministerial Liberty; we being commanded to *cry aloud*, and to *lift up our Voices as Trumpets*, to shew the People their Transgressions, and the House of Jacob their Sins.

HAD

* Mr. Marshal, Mr. Calamy, Mr. Whitakers
Mr. Sedgwick, &c. † Mr. Whitaker, Mr. Calamy, Mr. Ash, &c.

HAD a Conference been desired with us only to have given you Resolution, whether the Ways wherein at the present you are walking are agreeable to the Word of GOD, (which Case indeed had been suitable for Private Persons to have propounded, and for Ministers of the Gospel to have resolved) we should most willingly and freely have deliver'd our *Judgments* (as our 'fore-mentioned Brethren have done) concerning these your Practises; and have given you this as our Advice, grounded upon Scripture, *viz.* That, instead of proceeding further in such unwarrantable Courses, you should have testify'd your timely and godly Sorrow for what (so clearly against the direct Rule of the Word) you have already acted.

AND if only for the clearing of this Case a Conference had been desired, it was from the first professed that we should be ready and willing to meet, where and with whom soever, to assert and maintain our Judgment therein. But as if the *Justness* of your Way were already granted by us, we were only invited to contribute our Assistance, in Prosecution of what you had undertaken, which we conceive to be out of your Sphere: And for us to have joined in Consultations of this Nature would have made us accessory unto them, guilty of the Evil which is in them, and even *Partakers* of other Mens Sins, contrary to the Apostle's Rule, who bids us abstain even from all Appearance of Evil, and have no Fellowship with the unfruitful Works of Darkness, but reprove them rather.

1 Tim. 5. 22.

1 Thes. 5. 22.

Ephes. 5. 11.

IT is already sufficiently known (besides all former Miscarriages) what Attempts of late have been put in practice against *lawful Authority*, especially by your late Remonstrance and Declaration, published in Opposition to the Proceedings of Parliament; as also by seizing and imprisoning the King's Person, without the Knowledge and Consent of Parliament, and by that late unparallel'd Violence offered to the Members of it, forcibly hindering above One Hundred of them (if we mistake not the Number) from sitting in Parliament; imprisoning many of their Persons, though many of them are known to us to be Men of Eminent Worth and Integrity, and who have given most ample Testimony of their real Affections to the Good of the Kingdom: And, besides all this, there is an Intent of framing and contriving a new Module, as well of the Laws and Government of the Kingdom, as of the Constitution of a new kind of *Representative* (as you call it) instead of this and all future Parliaments; and this to be Subscribed throughout the Kingdom, under the Notion of, *An Agreement of the People*, as it is declared in your late Remonstrance of November 16. 1648. pag. 67. All which Practices we cannot but judge to be manifestly opposite to the Lawful Authority of those Magistrates whom GOD hath set over us, and to the Duty and Obedience which, by the Laws of GOD and Man, and by our manifold Oaths and Covenants, we stand obliged to render to them. And therefore we judge it our Duty rather to testify our utter Dislike and Detestation, than to give any (though but implicate and interpretative) Approbation of them. WE

WE remember the Advice of Solomon, *Fear thou the LORD and the KING, and meddle not with them that are given to change* [Prov. 24. 21.]; And that of Paul, *Withdraw from every Brother that walketh disorderly, and not according to the Traditions which you have received of us* [2 Thes. 3. 6.]: Of which this is one, *Put them in mind to be subject to Principalities and Powers, and to obey Magistrates* [Tit. 3. 1.]; And, *Let every Soul be subject to the Higher Powers; for there is no Power but of God, the Powers that be are Ordained of God: Whosoever therefore resisteth the Power resisteth the Ordinance of God, and they that resist shall receive to themselves Damnation* [Rom. 13. 1, 2.] The Fear of GOD therefore (whose Ordinance is violated when Magistracy is opposed) makes us afraid of meddling with those, who, without any Colour of Legal Authority, meerly upon the Presumption of Strength, shall attempt such Changes as these are. And we cannot but be deeply affected with Grief and Astonishment, to see that an Army raised by Authority of Parliament, for the Preservation of the Privileges thereof, and of our Religion, Laws, and Liberties, should, contrary to their Trust and many Engagements, do that which tends to the manifest Subversion of them all.

WE have not forgotten those declared Grounds and Principles upon which the Parliament first took up Arms, and upon which we were induced to join with them; (from which we have not hitherto declined, and we trust, through GOD's Grace, never shall.) We remember, That when the King, with a Multi-

tude of Armed Men, demanded but a small Number (in Comparifon of thofe now fecluded by you) of the Members of Parliament, it was deemed fuch an horrid Violation of their Privileges, and an Act fo injurious, and deftructive to the Good of the Kingdom, as had not (then) any Precedent or Parallel : And of what Nature it was judged to be, by a Parliament then free and full, may appear by the Order of the Houfe of Commons, *January 3. 1641.* when, hearing but of a Purpose in the King to feize upon fome of their Members, they declared,

“ If any Perfon whatfoever fhall offer to Arrest
 “ or detain the Perfon of any Member of this
 “ Houfe, without firft acquainting the Houfe
 “ therewith, and receiving further Order from
 “ this Houfe, That it is lawful for fuch Mem-
 “ ber, for any Perfon to affift him, and to ftand
 “ upon his or their Guard of Defence, and to
 “ make Refiftance according to the Proteftation
 “ taken to defend the Privileges of Parliament;
 and by the Declaration of *January 17. 1641.*

“ That the Arresting of any Member of Parlia-
 “ ment, by any Warrant whatfoever, without
 “ a Legal Proceeding againft them, and with-
 “ out Consent of that Houfe whereof fuch Per-
 “ fon is a Member, is againft the Liberty of
 “ the Subject, and a Breach of Privilege of Par-
 “ liament ; And the Perfon which fhall Arrest
 “ any of thefe Perfons, or any other Member
 “ of the Parliament, is declared a publick Ene-
 “ my of the Common-wealth. ” And this Vi-
 olation of their Privileges was that which did
 occafion firft a Guard, and was afterwards one
 Reason of raifing an Army : But that an Army
 thus

thus raised by their Authority, and for their Preservation, should now so far exceed that Act which was then esteemed without a Parallel, could hardly have been imagined by us, had not our Eyes been Witnessees of it.

AND although both Houses of Parliament (who are jointly, together with the King, entrusted with the Supream Authority of the Kingdom) saw Cause to take up Arms for their own Defence, against the Attempts made upon them by the King and his Evil Counsellours, and for the Preservation of the Protestant Religion Established, (which was then indangered by the Growth of several Errours and Innovations) and for the securing the Fundamental Laws and Constitutions of the Kingdom, which they apprehended then to be undermined by several illegal Incroachments; yet this cannot be pleaded as any *Justification* or *Precedent* for you (who, in reference to the Power of Magistracy, are but Private Persons) to usurp an Authority over King and Parliament, and to intermeddle with Affairs which belong not to you. For the Laws of GOD, Nature, and Nations, together with the Dictates of Reason, and the common Consent of all Casuists, allow that to those which are intrusted with managing the Supream Authority of a State or Kingdom, which they do not allow to a Multitude of Private Persons, tho' they have Strength in their Hands to effect it.

AND moreover, although the Parliament thus took up Arms, for the Defence of their Persons and Privileges, and the Preservation of Religion, Laws, and Liberties, yet was it not
their

their Intention thereby to do Violence to the Person of the King, or divest him of his Regal Authority, or what of Right belongeth to him (as appears by their Declarations in that behalf); much less was it their Purpose to subvert and overthrow the whole Frame and Fundamental Constitution of the Government of the Kingdom, or to give Power and Authority to any Persons whatsoever so to do.

AND therefore we apprehend our selves obliged thus to appear for the Maintenance of our Religion, Laws, and Liberties, together with the Constitution, Power, and Privilege of Parliament, and the settled Government of the Kingdom, both, on the one hand, against all malignant Counsels and Designs for the Introduction of an Arbitrary Tyrannical Power in the King, and, on the other hand, against all irregular licentious Proceedings of Private Persons, tending to the Subversion of them, and to the Introduction of Anarchy, Confusion, Profaneness, and Irreligion.

AND we are the more strongly engaged thus to adhere firmly to these our former just Principles, by reason of the several Oaths and Covenants generally taken throughout the Kingdom, as by the *Protestation* of May 5. 1641 wherein we do, "in the Presence of Almighty GOD, promise, vow, and protest, according to the Duty of our Allegiance, to maintain and defend, with our Lives, Power, and Estates, His Majesty's Royal Person, Honour and Estate, and the Power and Privilege of Parliament;" As also by the *Vow* and *Covenant* wherein the Lords and Commons have declared

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declared, " That there had been a treacherous and
 " horrid Design to surprize the Cities of *Lon-*
 " *don* and *Westminster*, with the Suburbs, and
 " by Arms to force the Parliament : And fin-
 " ding by constant Experience, that many
 " Ways of Force and Treachery are continual-
 " ly attempted, &c. *Required*, That all that
 " are true-hearted and Lovers of their Coun-
 " try should bind themselves each to other in
 " that sacred Vow and Covenant, wherein we
 " declare our Abhorring and Detesting the said
 " wicked and treacherous Design, and that we
 " would, according to our Power and Vocation,
 " oppose and resist the same, and *all other of*
 " *the like Nature.*" And likewise by the so-
 " lemn *League and Covenant*, for the Reformation
 " and Defence of Religion, the Honour and Hap-
 " piness of the King, the Peace and Safety of the
 " Kingdom, &c. Wherein we have covenanted,
 " That we will sincerely, really, and constant-
 " ly, in our several Vocations, endeavour to
 " preserve the Rights and Privileges of the Par-
 " liament, and preserve and defend the King's
 " Majesty's Person and Authority, in the Pre-
 " servation and Defence of the true Religion
 " and Liberties of the Kingdoms; that the
 " World may bear witness with our Conscien-
 " ces of our Loyalty, and that we have no
 " Thoughts or Intentions to diminish His Ma-
 " jesty's just Power and Greatness.

IN all which Obligations, though the mat-
 ter of them may be, in part, of Civil Concern-
 ment, yet the Bond and Tie of an Oath and
 Covenant is Religious, Sacred, and Inviolable:
 Which though some may esteem no more than
 an

an *Almanack out of Date*, yet we look upon it as the *Oath of GOD*, in whose Name we have sworn, and who will certainly require it at our Hands.

WE know with what a jealous Eye and severe Hand the Lord avenged the Quarrel of his Covenant made by *Zedekiah* to the King of *Babylon*, though extorted from him, and prejudicial to him: [*Ezek. 17. 14, 15, 18, 19.*] *Shall he prosper, (saith God) shall he escape, that doth such Things? Or shall he break the Covenant & be delivered? As I live, saith the Lord, seeing he despised the Oath by breaking the Covenant, (when lo! he had given his Hand) he shall not escape. Therefore thus saith the Lord God, As I live, surely mine Oath that he hath despised, and my Covenant that he hath broken, even it will I recompence upon his own Head.* We dare not therefore (when we have lift up our Hands to the most High GOD) by the Violation of a more righteous Oath, provoke the Wrath of the Lord against us, who is the Searcher of all Hearts, and to whom we must give an Account at the Great Day.

INSTEAD therefore of joining in Consultation with you, we do earnestly intreat you, in the Name of our Lord and Master *Jesus Christ*, whose Ambassadors we are, That you would commune with your own Hearts, consider the Evil of your present Ways, and turn from them: *Remember from whence you are fallen and repent, and do your first Works.* You were once Honourable, and precious in the Eyes of us and others of GOD's Servants, while you kept in GOD's Way, and within your own Sphere;

Sphere; you had our Hearts, our Help, and our Prayers, for Success therein: But alas! you have eclipsed your own Glory, and brought a Cloud over all your Excellencies. You are now walking in By-paths of your own, wherein we dare not say, *The Blessing of the Lord be upon you, We bless you in the Name of the Lord*, nor bid you *God speed*, lest we be Partakers of your evil Deeds. Instead of preserving the Truth & Purity of Religion and the Worship of GOD, we fear, you are opening a Door to desperate & damnable Errours and Heresies against the Truth of GOD, and to many licentious and wicked Practices against the Worship and Ways of GOD. How is Religion made to stink by reason of your Miscarriages, and like to become a Scorn and a Reproach in all the Christian World? How are the Faces of GOD's faithful Servants covered with Shame, and their Hearts filled with Sorrow and Grief, by reason thereof? How is the Golden Cord of Government broken in sunder? the Honour and Authority of Magistracy laid in the Dust? How hath the *Parliament*, which sustained the Force and Opposition of professed Enemies for many Years, been made contemptible and torn in pieces by professed Friends in One Day?

YOU cannot but know how fully and frequently GOD's Word commandeth and forceth Obedience and Submission to Magistrates, forbidding and condemning (and that under pain of Damnation) such Practices as these of yours are. As likewise what severe Threatnings and exemplary Judgments from GOD have been denounced against, and inflicted

cted on the Contemners and Opposers of this his Ordinance. You know what a Brand the Apostle *Jude* sets upon those that *despise Dominion and speak evil of Dignities: Wo unto them* (saith he, ver. 8, 11.) *for they have gone in the Way of Cain, and run greedily after the Error of Balaam for a Reward, and perished in the Gain-saying of Corah.*

YOU know the sad Examples of *Corah, Dathan, and Abiram*, in their mutinous Rebellion and Levelling Design against Magistracy and Ministry, in the Persons of *Moses* and *Aaron*: *You take too much upon you* (saith they to *Moses* and *Aaron*, Numb. 16. 3, 11, 26, 32, 33, 29.) *seeing all the Congregation are holy. Wherefore then lift you up your selves above the Congregation of the Lord?* Which *Moses* fears not to call *A gathering together against the Lord*, and warns the People to avoid their Company: *Depart from the Tents of these wicked Men, and touch nothing of theirs, lest ye be consumed in all their Sins.* After which the Earth opened her Mouth, and swallowed them up, with all that appertained to them: And yet there were in that Rebellion a considerable Number of Eminent Men, *Two Hundred and Fifty Princes of the Assembly, famous in the Congregation, Men of Renown.*

AND consonant to the Tenour of the Scriptures herein hath alway been the constant judgment and Doctrine of Protestant Divines, both at home and abroad, with whose judgments we do fully concur, disclaiming, detesting and abhorring the wicked and bloody Tenents and Practices of *Jesuites*, (the worst of *Papists*) concerning the opposing of Lawful Magistrates by

Private

Private Persons, and the Murthering of Kings by any, though under the most specious and colourable Pretences. Which *Jesuitical* Principles and Counsels, we fear, may have too great a Concurrence with, if not an Influence upon, these late Transactions.

AND now we desire you seriously, and as in the Sight of GOD, to examin your own Hearts and Ways, and to deal with your selves as sometimes *Nathan* did with *David*. Put case some other Party of Men in the Kingdom, whose Principles had not been concurrent with yours, should have attempted Acts of such a Nature as those that you have performed; as Seizing the King's Person, and removing him from Place to Place, without and against his and the Parliament's Consent; would it not have been judged by you an intolerable Contempt both of his and their Authority? Put case they & their Confederates had attempted the Removal of the Parliament's Guards, secured or inhibited a great Number of their Members, contrived and promoted new Models of their own, destructive to the Being both of this and all other Parliaments, with other Acts of the like Nature; we appeal to your own Consciences, what Clamours and Accusations against them would from your selves have proceeded. And if in other Persons you would condemn the *Fact*, the Lord grant you Hearts to see *who are the Men*. Was it once a Crime of the highest Nature to endeavour the Subversion of the Fundamental Laws of the Kingdom, to dissuade the Calling, or perswade the Dissolution of Parliaments, to countenance *Arminians* or connive at *Papists*; and can it

now be commendable to contrive the Subversion of the whole Laws and Government of the Kingdom all at once, and instead of a few Errors to allow (as we fear some amongst you endeavour) a total Impunity, and universal Toleration of all Religions? *Be not deceived, God is not mocked*: He knows how frequently you condemn that as a great Crime in others which you would have accounted a Virtue in yourselves; but GOD, who is no Respector of Persons, alloweth no such Rule. [Rom. 1. 32.] *Those who knowing the Judgment of God, that they which commit such Things are worthy of Death, not only do the same Things, but have Pleasure in (or, consent with) them that do them, in judging another condemn themselves.* [Rom. 2. 1, 3.] *And thinkest thou this, O Man, that judgest them which do such Things, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the Judgment of God?* No surely, [Ver. 2. 6. 11.] *we are sure the Judgment of God is according to Truth, against them which commit such Things, who will render to every Man according to his Deeds; For there is no Respect of Persons with God.*

WE desire that you would not be too confident on former Successes. If GOD hath made you prosper while you were in *his Way*, this can be no Warrant for you to walk in Ways of *your own*, and promise your selves Success therein; Nay, if through GOD's Permission (for Reasons best known to himself) you have had, or may have, Success in an Evil Way, yet is it no *Justification* thereof, nor Incouragement to proceed therein. Yea, you know that it is one of

of the greatest Judgments when GOD suffers Men to prosper in sinful Courses. Wise Solomon tells us [Eccl. 8. 14.] from his own Experience, that *there be sometimes just Men to whom it happeneth according to the Work of the wicked; again, There be wicked Men to whom it happeneth according to the Work of the righteous*: [Ch. 7. 15.] *There is a just Man that perisheth in his Righteousness, and there is a wicked Man that prolongeth his Life in his Wickedness*: But [Ch. 8. 11.] *because Sentence against an evil Work is not executed speedily, shall therefore the Heart of the Sons of Men be fully set in them to do Evil? GOD forbid!*

AND therefore the Providence of GOD (which is so often pleaded in justification of your Ways) is no safe Rule to walk by, especially in such Acts as the Word of God condemns. God doth not approve the Practice of whatsoever his Providence doth permit. When David, in the Cave, had an Opportunity to destroy Saul, (who was then in actual Pursuance of him for his Life) David's Men make use of such an Argument from Providence [1 Sam, 24. 4, 6, 7, 13.]: *Behold, say they, the Day of which the Lord said unto thee, Behold, I will deliver thine Enemy into thine Hand, that thou may'st do to him as it shall seem good unto thee*; but David neither durst himself, nor would permit his Men to make use thereof, but saith, *The Lord forbid that I should do this Thing unto my Master the Lord's Anointed, to stretch forth my Hand against him*. Again; When David found Saul sleeping in his Trench, *Behold a Providence!* (might Abishai have said). God, saith he, *hath delivered*

delivered thine Enemy into thine Hand this Day, now therefore let me smite him, &c. No! (saith David) *Destroy him not, for who can stretch forth his Hand against the Lord's Anointed, and be guiltless?* [1 Sam. 26. 8, 9.] But if to follow Providence had been a sufficient Warrant, David should have taken another Course. In Sum, if this be a good Warrant, nothing can be a Sin, for nothing can come to pass at all unless the permissive Providence of God afford an Opportunity.

NOR is it safe to be guided by Impulses of Spirit, or pretended Impressions on your Hearts, without or against the Rule of GOD's written Word: For by this means the Temptations of Satan and the Motions of God's Spirit will be put in equal Ballance. And we desire you likewise to consider, whether any History, sacred or profane, recordeth any Example of an Impulse of Spirit falling upon Multitudes of Persons at the same Time, putting them all at once upon Performances contrary to moral Precepts; as also, whether such Persons who are acted by an Impulse of Spirit can command others who want it, (nay, who do not so much as pretend to have it) to do that unto which themselves pretend to be so much incited? We know that it is the Duty of Christians to try such Instigations by the Word of God, and examin how well they agree thereunto, that they may accordingly judge whether it be the Voice of God or the Voice of Satan, and of their own corrupt Hearts, that prompteth them. *To the Law and to the Testimony; if they speak not according to this Word, it is because there is no Light in them.* [Isa. 28. 20.]

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The Apostle *Peter* directs the *Jews* to whom he wrote to adhere to the Word written, as to a *more sure Word of Prophecy*. By the same Rule whereby we must *try the Spirits* we must also try the *Impulses of Spirit*, otherwise we do exceedingly strengthen the Devil's Hands against our own Souls, and tempt him to tempt us.

IF beyond all this you plead Necessity of doing thus, lest what you pretend as a glorious Work might else miscarry, and therefore venture on these Ways, which are by your selves confessed to be *irregular and not justifiable*; we answer, that no Necessity can oblige a Man to sin; God stands not in need of our Sin to carry on his own Work. *Will ye speak wickedly for God, and talk deceitfully for him?* saith *Job*.

AND yet this Plea of Necessity is of less Weight in your Case, because, we fear, the Ends you aim at are no more justifiable than the Means you use; and the Necessity pleaded is either merely pretended, or at least contracted by your own Miscarriages.

BUT if at any Time a Precept of GOD may be dispensed with upon a Necessity, yet, we suppose, your selves will grant, That this Necessity must be absolute, present, and clear; not doubtful, uncertain, and conjectural, as that which is alledged in your Case must needs be, it being discerned only by your selves and your own Party. It is most apparent to us, that there was of late no Necessity of these your irregular Practices; the Parliament being (till forced by you) full and free, acting what was covenanted for, and (if we mistake not) what was agreed upon long before by the Parliaments
of

of both Kingdoms. Besides, you have engaged your selves by an Oath to preserve His Majesty's Person and the Privileges of Parliament; & this is most clear, that no Necessity can justify Perjury, or dispense with Lawful Oaths; that dreadful *flying Roll* being ready to seize upon him that *sweareth falsely by the Name of God* [Zech. 5. 4.]. An Example of which severe Judgment from God, for the Violation of an Oath, you have in *Saul*, who tho' he did out of a good Intention, *in his Zeal to the Children of Israel*, slay the *Gibeonites*, (a People formerly accursed, and who had fallaciously procured a Covenant from *Josbua* above Two Hundred Years before) yet, for *Saul's* breaking of that Covenant, was the whole Kingdom of *Israel*, and his Posterity in particular, most severely punished by God.

WE do therefore, upon the whole matter, seriously beseech you, as in the Sight of God, to recede from these evil Ways, and contain your selves within your own Bounds, to learn *John Baptist's* Lesson for Soldiers, *Do Violence to no Man*, (or, Put no Man in Fear) *neither accuse any Man falsely, and be content with your Wages*. But if you persist in these Ways, *behold, you have sinned against the Lord, and be sure your Sin will find you out* [Num. 32. 23.]; and take heed, lest when the Hand of God shall overtake you, and turn the Wheel upon you, you be found to suffer both *as Evil-doers* and *as Busy-bodies in other Mens Matters*. [1 Pet. 4. 15.]

AND when you shall thus return to your Duty, as we have Cause to bless God for it, so we shall not need to fear those Threatnings which

which some of us have received (we say not from your selves, yet) from Messengers directed (as they informed us) immediately from your selves to some of us, *That if we persist to stir up the People to Sedition* (for so, it seems, our bewailing your Sins before the Lord is interpreted) *and Soldiers do us a Mischief; we may thank our selves; That if there follow another War, you will give Quarter to none that stand against you; That you will spare neither Man, Woman, nor Child, English or Stranger.* But if these our Exhortations prevail not, we have discharged our Duty, and, we hope, *delivered our own Souls;* and if it be our Portion to suffer, we trust we shall *suffer as Christians,* and for *well doing,* and that such Sufferings shall be acceptable with God, in whose Sight the Death of his Saints is precious, who, *when he maketh Inquisition for Blood, forgetteth not the Cry of the Humble:* And tho' some of us were told, by One of the Messengers sent from you, *That, if we put our selves upon Suffering, we shall have Suffering enough,* yet we know, that *the GOD whom we serve is able to deliver us;* To whom, in the Discharge of our Duty, we commit the *Keeping of our Souls, as to a faithful Creatour.*

AND thus, out of a Zeal to GOD's Glory, a Care to discharge our own Duties, and an hearty Desire after the Comfort and Salvation of your Souls, we have freely and faithfully declared our judgments concerning your late and present Proceedings. If the Lord please to make it effectual for your Reformation, we, and all the Churches of Christ, shall have Cause to bless

God for you; but if for our Sins, and the Sins of the Land, the Lord shall make you Instruments of Misery and Confusion, (which your present Actings do certainly tend to) we will say with *Eli*, *It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good.* But we hope better Things of you, and subscribe our selves

Jan. 17. 1648. Your Servants in the Lord

Thomas Gataker, Pastor of Rotherith.

George Walker, Pastor of *John* Evangelist.

Arthur Jackson, Pastor of Michael Woodstr.

Cha. Offspring, Pastor of Antholines.

H. Robrough, Pastor of Leonards Eastcheap.

N. Profet, Minister of the Word at Fosters.

T. Case, Minister of Maudlins Milkstreet.

S. Gower, Min. of the Gos. at Martins Ludg.

And. Janeway, of Alhallows on the Wall.

Sam. Clark, Minister of Bennet-Fynk.

Tho. Clandon, Pastor of Alhallows Barking.

John Wale, Minister of Michael Cornhil.

James Cranford, Pastor of Christophers.

James Nalton, Pastor of Leonard Fosterlane.

T. Cawton, Pastor of Bartholomew Exchange.

John Fuller, Minist. of Butolphs Bishopsgate.

Francis Roberts, Pastor of Austins.

W. Jenkin, Pastor of Christ-Church.

Elidad Blackwel, Pastor of Alhallows Underhaft.

W. Harrison, Minister of Grace-Church.

Job

John Sheffield, Minister of Swithins.

Mat. Haviland, Minister of Trinity-parish

G. Smalewood, Pastor of Mildreds Poultry.

W. Taylor, Past. of Stephens Colemanstreet

Chr. Love, Pastor of Ann Aldersgate.

Robert Mercer, Minister of Brides

Ralph Robinson, Pastor of Mary-Woolnoth.

W. Blackmore, Pastor of Peters Cornhil.

Fran. Peck, Pastor of Nicholas Acons.

Stephen Watkins, Minister of the Gospel at
Saviours Southwark.

W. Wickins, Pastor of Andrew Hubbard.

John Wallis, Minister of Martins Iron-mon-
ger-lane.

Tho. Manton, Minister of Stoke-Newing-
ton.

Tho. Gouge, Minister of Sepulchres.

Tho. Watson, Pastor of Stephens Walbrook

N. Stanniforth, Minister of Mary-Bothaw.

John Halk, Preacher at Alhallows on the
Wall.

John Glasscock, Minister of the Gospel at
Andrew Undershaft.

Tho. Whateley, Pastor of Mary-Woolchurch

Jacob Tice, Pastor of Buttolph Billingsgate

Jonath. Lloyd, Pastor of James Garlickhith

John Morton, Pastor of Newington-Buts.

Joshua Kirby, Minister of the Word.

Artbur Barnham, Pastor of Helens.

Benjamin Needler, Pastor of Margaret Moses

John Wells, Minister of Olives-jury.

R. Matthew, Minister of Andrew Wardrobe,



A VINDICATION of the Ministers
of the Gospel in and about London from the
unjust Aspersions cast upon their former A-
ctions for the Parliament, as if they had pro-
moted the bringing of the KING to Capital
Punishment. With a short Exhortation to
their People to keep close to their Covenant-
Engagement.

ISAIAH LXII. 1.

FOR Zions sake, I will not hold my peace, and
for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until the
Righteousness thereof go forth as Brightness,
and the Salvation thereof as a Lamp that bur-
neth.

PROV. 24. 21, 22. My Son, fear thou the
Lord and the King, and meddle not with
those that are given to change: For their Ca-
lamity shall rise suddenly, and who knoweth
the Ruin of them both.

T cannot be unknown how much we
and other Ministers of this City and
Kingdom, that faithfully adhered to
the Parliament, have injuriously
smarted under the Scourge of evil
Tongues and Pens, ever since the first Eruption
of the unhappy Differences and unnatural War
between King and Parliament, for our Obedi-
ence

ence to the Commands and Orders of the Honourable Houses, in their Contests with His Majesty, and Conflicts with his Armies.

WE are not ignorant of the over-busy Intermedlings of Prelates and their Party heretofore, in over-ruling Civil Affairs, to the great endangering of Kingdoms; and of this in particular when private Interests, ambitious Designs, Revenge, or other sinister Ends, engaged them beyond their Sphere. Howbeit, if cannot reasonably (as we conceive) be denied, that Ministers, as *Subjects*, being bound to obey the Laws, and to preserve the Liberties of the Kingdom, and having an Interest in them and the Happiness of them, as well as others, may and ought (without incurring the just Censure due to Busy-bodies and Incendiaries) to appear, for preserving the Laws and Liberties of that Commonwealth whereof they are Members, especially in our Case, when it was declared by the Parliament that all was at Stake, and in danger to be lost. No, nor as *Ministers* ought they to hold their peace, in a Time wherein the Sins of Rulers & Magistrates, as well as others, have so far provoked God as to kindle the Fire of his Wrath against his People. And yet for this alone the faithful Servants of God have, in all Ages, through the Malice of Satan and his Instruments, been traduced as Arch-Incendiaries, when only their Accusers are indeed guilty of both laying the Train, and of putting fire to it, to blow up a Kingdom.

AN *Abab* and his Sycophants think none so fit to bear the Odium of being the grand *Troubler of Israel* as *Elijah*. Thus the Popish De-

vice

vice was, to charge the *Gun-powder Treason* (had it taken effect) upon the *Puritans*: And, if you believe *Tertullus*, even a *Paul* is a *pestilent Fellow*, a *Mover of Sedition throughout the World*, and a *Ringleader of a Sect*; and what not, but what he is? Yea, *Christ* himself (tho' a *Friend to Monarchy*, even of *heathenish Rome*) is proclaimed an *Enemy to Caesar*, to open a Way to his Destruction, by their Malice who never cared for the Interest of *Caesar*.

WHEREFORE, although *with us*, who have had Experience of like Usage, *it be a small Thing to be thus judged of Men*, when we regard only our own particular Persons: For, if they call the Master of the House *Beel-zebub*, how much more those of his Household? yet when we consider how much it concerns the Honour of our Master, and the Good of all, to preserve our Ministerial Function immaculate (our good Names being, in that relation, as needful to others as a good Conscience to our selves) we dare not but stand by and assert the Integrity of our Hearts, and the Innocency of all our Actings (in reference to the King and Kingdom) for which we are so much calumniated and traduced.

THIS we are compelled to at this Time, because there are many who confidently (yet most unjustly) charge us to have been formerly instrumental toward the taking away the Life of the King. And because also there are others who in their scurrilous Pasquils and Libels (as well as with their virulent Tongues) present us to the World as a *bloody seditious Sect*, and *traiterous Obstructors of what all the godly People*
of

of the Kingdom do earnestly desire for establishing of Religion and Peace, in that we stick at the Execution of the King, while yet we are (as they falsely affirm) content to have him convicted and condemned: All which we must and do, from our Hearts, disclaim, before the whole World.

FOR when we did first engage with the Parliament, (which we did not 'till called thereunto) we did it with Loyal Hearts and Affection towards the King and his Posterity: Not intending the least Hurt to his Person, but to stop his Party from doing further Hurt to the Kingdom; not to bring His Majesty to Justice (as some now speak) but to put him into a better Capacity to do justice: To remove the wicked from before him, that his Throne might be established in Righteousness; not to dethrone and destroy him, which (we much fear) is the ready Way to the Destruction of all his Kingdoms.

THAT which put on any of us at first to appear for the Parliament was, The Propositions and Orders of the Lords and Commons in Parliament (June 10. 1642.) for bringing in of Money and Plate, &c. wherein they assured us, that whatsoever should be brought in thereupon should not be imploy'd upon any other Occasion than to maintain the Protestant Religion, the King's Authority, his Person in his Royal Dignity, the free Course of Justice, the Laws of the Land, the Peace of the Kingdom, and the Privileges of Parliament, against any Force which shall oppose them.

AND in this we were daily confirmed and encouraged more and more, by their many sub-

sequent

requent Declarations and Protestations, which we held our selves bound to believe, knowing many of them to be Godly and Conscientious Men, of Publick Spirits, zealously promoting the Common Good, and labouring to free this Kingdom from Tyranny and Slavery, which some evil Instruments about the King endeavoured to bring upon the Nation.

AS for the present Actings at *Westminster*, since the Time that so many of the Members were by Force secluded, divers imprisoned, and others thereupon withdrew from the House of Commons, (and there not being that Conjunction of the Two Houses as heretofore) we are wholly unsatisfied therein, because we conceive them to be so far from being warranted by sufficient Authority, as that, in our Apprehensions, they tend to an actual Alteration (if not Subversion) of that which the Honourable *House of Commons*, in their *Declaration of April 17. 1646.* have taught us to call *the Fundamental Constitution & Government of this Kingdom*, which they therein assure us (if we understand them) they would never alter.

YEA, we hold our selves bound in Duty to God, Religion, the King, Parliament, and Kingdom, to profess before God, Angels, and Men, That we verily believe that which is so much feared to be now in Agitation, *The taking away the Life of the King*, in the present Way of Tryal, is, not only not agreeable to any Word of God, the Principles of the Protestant Religion (never yet stained wth the least Drop of Blood of a King) or the Fundamental Constitution and Government of this Kingdom, but con-

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trary

trary to them, as also to the *Oath of Allegiance*, the *Protestation of May 5. 1641.* and the *solemn League and Covenant*; from all or any of which Engagements we know not any Power on Earth able to absolve us or others.

IN which last we have sworn (with Hands lifted up to the most High GOD) *That we shall with Sincerity, Reality, and Constancy, in our several Vocations, endeavour, with our Estates and Lives, mutually to preserve and defend the Rights and Privileges of the Parliament, and the Liberties of the Kingdoms, and to preserve and defend the King's Majesty's Person and Authority, in the Defence of the true Religion and Liberties of the Kingdoms : That the World may bear witness with our Consciences of our Loyalty, and that we have no Thoughts or Intentions to diminish His Majesty's just Power and Greatness.*

AND we are yet further tied by another Article of the same Covenant, *not to suffer ourselves, directly or indirectly, by whatsoever Combination, Perswasion, or Terrour, to be divided or withdrawn from this blessed Union and Conjunction, whether to make defection to the contrary Party, or to give our selves to a detestable Indifferency or Neutrality, in this Cause, which so much concerns the Glory of God, the Good of the Kingdoms, and Honour of the King; but shall all the Days of our Lives zealously and constantly continue therein, against all Opposition, and promote the same, according to our Power, against all Lets and Impediments whatsoever.* And thus we have not only taken our selves, but most of us have, by Command of the Parliament administered it to others, whom we have thereby

draw

drawn in to be as deep as our selves in this publick Engagement.

THEREFORE, according to that our Covenant, we do, in the Name of the great GOD, (to whom all must give a strict Account) warn and exhort all who either more immediately belong to our respective Charges, or any way depend on our Ministry, or to whom we have administer'd the said Covenant, (that we may not by our Silence suffer them to run upon that highly provoking Sin of Perjury) to keep close to the Ways of God, and the Rules of Religior, the Laws, and their Vows, in their constant maintaining the true Reformed Religion, the Fundamental Constitution and Government of this Kingdom, not suffering themselves to be seduced from it, by being drawn to subscribe the late Models, or *Agreement of the People*, which directly tends to the utter Subversion of the whole Frame of the Fundamental Government of the Land, and makes way for an universal Toleration of all Heresies and Blasphemies (directly contrary to our Covenant) if they can but get their Abettors to cover them under a false Guise of *the Christian Religion*) as also in preserving the Privileges of both Houses of Parliament, and the Union between the Two Nations of *England* and *Scotland*; to mourn bitterly for their own Sins, the Sins of the City, Army, Parliament, and Kingdom, and the woful Miscarriages of the King himself (which we cannot but acknowledge to be many and very great) in his Government, that have cost the Three Kingdoms so dear, and cast him down from his Excellency into an horrid Pit of Misery, almost

beyond Example : And to pray that God would both give him effectual Repentance, and sanctify that bitter Cup of Divine Displeasure that the Divine Providence hath put into his Hand, as also that God would restrain the Violence of Men, that they may not dare draw upon themselves and the Kingdom the Blood of their Sovereign.

AND now, we have good Reason to expect, that they who brought us under such a Bond, and thereby led us into the Necessity of this present Vindication, and Manifestation of our judgments, and Discharge of our Consciences, should defend us in it. However, we resolve rather to be of their Number that tremble at his *Terrors* who is a *Consuming Fire*, and will not fail to *avenge the Quarrel of his Covenant* upon all that contemn it, than to be found among those who *despise the Oath by breaking his Covenant*, (*after lifting up the Hand*) altho' it had been made but in Civil Things only, and that with the worst of Men.

C. Burges, D. D. Preacher of the Word in Paul's, Lond.

Will. Gouge, D. D. Pastor of Black-Friars.

Edm. Stanton, D. D. Pastor of Kingston.

Tho. Temple, D. D. Pastor of Battersey.

Geo. Walker, Pastor of John Evang.

Edm. Calamy, Pastor of Aldermanbury.

Jer. Whitaker, Pastor of Mag. Bermunsey.

Dan.

Sam. Cawdrey, Minister of Martins in the Fields.

W. Spurstow, Minist. of Hackney.

La. Seaman, Pastor of Alh. Breadstreet.

Simeon Ashe, Min. of Michael Basingshaw:

Tho. Case, Min. of Magd. Milkstreet.

N. Proffet. Minister at Fosters

I. Thorowgood, Min. of Crayford.

Edw. Corbet, Minist. of Croyden.

H. Roborough, Past. of Leonards Eastcheap.

J. Downham, Past. of Alh. Thames-street.

Arth. Jackson, Pastor of Michaels Woodstreet.

Ja. Nalton, Past. of Leonards Foster-lane.

Tho. Cawton, Past. of Bartholomews Exch:

Cha. Offspring, Pastor of Antholins.

Sa. Clark, Minister of Bennet-fynk.

Jo. Wall, Minister of Michael Cornhill.

Francis Roberts, Pastor of the Church at Austins.

Sam. Bolton, Pastor of Andrews Holbourn.

Mat. Haviland, Pastor of Trinity.

John Sheffield, Minister of Swithins.

Wm. Harrison, Minister of Gracechurch

WVill.

Will. Jenkyn, Minister of Christchurch.

John Viner, Pastor of Buttolph Aldgate.

Elidad Blackwell, Pastor of Andrew Undershaft.

John Cross, Minister at Matthews Friday-street.

John Fuller, Minister at Buttolph, Bishopsgate.

Wm. Taylor, Pastor of Stephens Coleman-street.

Peter Witham, Pastor of Albans Woodstr.

Fran. Peck, Pastor of Nich. Acorn

Chr. Love, Pastor of Anne Aldersgate.

John Vallis, Minister of Martin Ironmonger-Lane.

Tho. Watson, Pastor of Stephens Walbrook

W. Vickins, Pastor of Andrew Hubbard.

Tho. Manton, Minister of Stoke Newington.

Tho. Gouge, Pastor of Sepulchres.

Wm. Blackmore, Pastor of Peters Cornhill.

Robert Mercer, Minister of Brides.

Ra. Robinson, Pastor of Mary Woolnorth.

John Glascock, Min. at Undershaft.

Tho. Whaley Minist. of Mary Wool-church

Jon. Lloyd, Pastor of *James Garlick Hithe*.

John Wells, Pastor of *Olives Jury*.

Benj. Needler, Pastor of *Margaret Moses*.

Nath Stanniforth, Minister of *Mary Bothaw*.

Stephen Watkins Minister of *Mary Overies*

Jacob Tice, Pastor of *Buttolph Billingsgate*

John Stileman, Minister of *Rotherithe*

Josias Bull, Pastor of *North Cray*.

Jonathan Devereux, late Minister of *Andrews Holbourn*

Paul Russel, Preacher at *Hackney*.

Joshua Kirby, Minister of the Word.

Arthur Barham, Pastor at *Hellens*.

F I N I S.



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